

# NEBRASKA

Good Life. Great Mission.

DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



Jim Pillen, Governor

April 4th, 2026

Kendall Darling  
Children's Bureau Region 7  
Federal Office Building, Room 349  
601 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street  
Kansas City, MO 64106

Dear Mr. Darling,

The Division of Children and Family Services is submitting the attached Program Improvement Plan reflecting Nebraska's important work to improve outcomes for children and families.

Thank you for your ongoing support and guidance. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alyssa Bish".

Alyssa Bish, PhD  
Director, Division of Children and Family Services  
Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

### Right Home, Right Time

Nebraska respectfully submits this Program Improvement Plan (PIP) under the pilot framework outlined in Administration for Children and Families Technical Bulletin #14. Pilot participation reflects Nebraska’s commitment to strengthening safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes in alignment with the federal *A Home for Every Child* initiative.

Through the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) statewide assessment, case reviews, and stakeholder engagement, Nebraska identified key opportunities to improve prevention practices, placement stability, and timely permanency. Leveraging its Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) framework, the state began targeted strategies in advance of the final CFSR report (March 31, 2026).



Nebraska’s PIP focuses on three priorities aligned with the vision of *Right Home, Right Time*: (1) Support at home first, (2) relative/kin first placement when needed, and (3) safe permanency, without delay. Together, these priorities strengthen families, increase kinship connections, and ensure children experience safe, stable, and permanent homes.

Priority	Strategies	Monitoring
#1 Prevent unnecessary foster care entry	<p>Increase the number of eligible families referred to Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) services to prevent entry into foster care.</p> <p>Monitor FFPSA service referral, engagement, participation, and completion data to identify gaps and areas for improvement and partner with providers to improve service accessibility and responsiveness.</p>	<p>% of eligible families referred to FFPSA services</p> <p>Rate of foster care entry</p>
#2 Place in family settings with relatives or kin	<p>Increase early identification, notification, and engagement of relatives and kin within the first 30 days of entry into foster care.</p> <p>Conduct ongoing assessments of relatives/kin throughout the duration of the case, ensuring ongoing engagement with family and community supports.</p> <p>Utilize data dashboards/real-time reporting to monitor placement type, stability, and movement.</p>	<p>Time from removal to first relative/kin placement</p> <p>% of children placed with relatives/kin</p>
#3 Attain safe and timely permanency	<p>Maximize the Safe and Timely Accelerated Results (STAR) process to help children attain timely permanency.</p> <p>STAR provides a structured process for CFS case managers, supervisors, and administrators to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuously review and assess safety, permanency, well-being, and case plan goals.</li> <li>Utilize key practice tools, including Conditions for Return and Case Mapping, to evaluate case progress and address barriers to permanency.</li> </ul>	<p>% of children attaining permanency within 12 months from entry into foster care</p> <p>% of children attaining timely reunification, guardianship, or adoption</p>